

Longfellow Community Council Longfellow, Cooper, Howe & Hiawatha Neighborhoods

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May 5, 2006

Pamela Miner Community Planning Supervisor City of Minneapolis - CPED 350 South 5th St., Room 210 Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Ms. Miner,

Longfellow Community Council's River Gorge Committee offers the following comments related to the city of Minneapolis draft of the Mississippi River Critical Area Plan. The committee is pleased the city is finalizing this plan.

Longfellow Community Council (LCC) is the citizen participation group for the Longfellow, Cooper, Howe and Hiawatha neighborhoods in south Minneapolis. Our community identifies strongly with its proximity to the river, and the River Gorge Committee of LCC supports activities that preserve and enhance this valuable resource.

While the draft Critical Area Plan presents overall goals to preserve the river as a community asset, we suggest additional definition related to the preservation of open space, and building height in the Lower Gorge.

Re: Section B-5 Site Development Standards

The plan in its draft form does not specify structure height limits in the critical area urban open space district. We strongly suggest the Minneapolis Critical Area Plan include in its regulation the height limits clearly spelled out in state law governing critical area, which is 35 feet. Our current neighborhood zoning is 40 feet, but we would like to see this height limit linked to proximity to the river instead of just relying on neighborhood zoning for regulation.

Re: Section G-6 Boat access

The plan mentions the possibility of a marina in the gorge. We suggest the complete exclusion of marinas anywhere below St. Anthony Falls because of their limited usefulness, and the possibility of additional disturbance to gorge and shoreline habitat.

Re: Section C-4 Vegetation

We suggest more specific definition of the plant communities present in the Lower Gorge. Longfellow is home to a remnant mesic prairie near 36th Street and West River Parkway, as well as remnants of oak forest and an oak brushland currently undergoing restoration to oak savanna. Preservation of these spaces that characterize presettlement vegetation should be strongly defined in the plan, and the removal of native trees throughout the Urban Open Space portion of the corridor should be prohibited.

Thank you for your attention to these suggestions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Storey on behalf of River Gorge Committee

Longfellow Community Council